



## Clean Catch UK: Joint Action to Reduce Wildlife Bycatch Report for the Cetacean and Spurdog Local Focus Group Meetings

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**Meeting dates: 13–14 March 2023**

**Locations: Mevagissey Harbour and Newlyn Harbour**

### Introduction

The Local Focus Group (LFG) quayside visits were held with the aims of discussing project updates, providing an opportunity for the new members of the Clean Catch UK (CCUK) team to build relationships and trust with local fishers, and commencing discussions on the next phase of the CCUK programme. As per feedback received during the last LFG meeting, these quayside visits were held in place of a more formal indoor meeting, to make the best use of fishermen's time.

### Mevagissey Harbour – Day 1

- Cefas and Defra (“the CCUK team”) listened to first-hand experiences from fishermen regarding their **participation in the CCUK bycatch mitigation trial**. They described difficulties with the practicality of the initial trial prior to the decision by CCUK to remove LED lights as one of the devices being tested, and the challenges of frequent device changes and battery replacements.
- Conversations on **Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) systems**, which Cefas is trialling with volunteer fishermen, covered viewing angles of the onboard cameras for most effective capture of activity, and ensuring that equipment was functioning properly onboard vessels. A REM system issue was highlighted which the Cefas team were able to resolve on the day.
- A **Passive Acoustic Reflector (PAR) float prototype**, developed by Arribada Initiative and fishermen with a view to testing the PAR device for practicality and robustness, was provided for the fishermen taking part in the project to examine. Improvements made to the new design to prevent breakage were discussed, including avoiding leakages and modifying the shape of the device to make it stronger to withstand impact with the seabed and other objects.
- The **redeployment of passive acoustic recorders (C-PODs and F-PODs)** in Mevagissey and St Austell Bay to record the presence of cetaceans in the area was discussed with fishermen along with possible deployment locations of the PODs to avoid potential overlap with fishing areas. Fishermen also shared insights into their observations of cetaceans in the area over recent years.
- The CCUK team also visited the **Mevagissey Harbour Office**, to introduce themselves and the CCUK project to the Harbour Master. Aims of the project along with updates on the related scientific trials being undertaken in the area were presented, including the deployment of passive acoustic recorders (C-PODs and F-PODs) to monitor the presence of cetaceans in the area.

## Newlyn Harbour – Day 2

- The CCUK team met with a fisherman with an **Insight360 system** fitted on their boat; the Insight360 project being a multi-stakeholder collaboration which aims to develop an affordable and efficient electronic monitoring system for bycatch events. Possible adaptations to the system were discussed that would make its use easier during fishing activity.
- To gain **fresh insight into the practicalities of fishing operations and how bycatch mitigation measures might be tailored to these**, the CCUK team met with a net-rigger and observed the setting of gill-nets for large offshore gill-netter vessels working from Newlyn. During this session, the need for the **prototype PAR float** to be robust enough to withstand heavy impacts during net operation was highlighted by fishermen.
- A final meeting was held in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) office to discuss **scientific collaboration** between the CCUK team and the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation (CFPO), with local fishing representatives from the Cornish Sardine Management Association (CSMA) and the National Federation of Fishing Organisations (NFFO) also in attendance. The opportunity was also taken to present the CleanCatch mobile application and to take fishermen through the process of using it.

### Concluding remarks

These LFG quayside visits have provided the CCUK team with a range of valuable feedback and insight, in terms of the daily realities of fishing activities, communication needs, and ways to ensure the effectiveness of collaborations with the fishing industry. Looking forward to the next stages of CCUK, work will focus on the production of the PAR devices and gathering feedback during initial trials of the newly developed device.

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### Full schedule of actions

#	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
1	Continue to hold more informal quayside visits as and when needed.	Cefas
2	CCUK to deliver Passive Acoustic Reflectors to volunteer fishermen and gather feedback on their performance.	Cefas